

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
ICAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 /078 W
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O R 071727Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7077
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 699

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: VAN HEERDEN COMMENT ON LEAKS ON EXPLANATORY
MESSAGE

REF: CAPE TOWN 695,

1. DURING A SHORT PRIVATE MEETING WITH NEIL VAN HEERDEN,
AIDE TO FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA, JUST PRIOR TO HIS SESSION
AT CAPE TOWN PRESS CLUB, AMBASSADOR MCHENRY DISCUSSED THE
REPORT HE HAD RECEIVED THAT THE EVENING ARGUS PAPERS WOULD
CARRY EXCERPTS FROM THE CONTACT GROUP'S EXPLANATORY
MESSAGE TRANSMITTING THE WESTERN PROPOSAL TO THE SAG. VAN
HEERDEN SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
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LEAK, BUT HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO A VIVID ACCOUNT OF EXTREME
PRESSURE WHICH BOTHA IS FACING IN THE CABINET ON THE
NAMIBIAN ISSUE. VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT AFTER THE CABINET
MEETING TWO WEEKS AGO, PRIOR TO KAPUUBO'S DEATH,
BOTHA HAD EMERGED "WHITE AS A SHEET." VAN HEERDEN SAID
THAT BOTHA HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD COME UNDER DEVASTATING
ATTACK ON THE NEGOTIATIONS. VAN HEERDEN ADDED:

"PREVIOUSLY WE HAD THOUGHT THAT WE HAD FOUR OR FIVE CABINET MEMBERS WITH US, BUT ONLY ONE STUCK WITH BOTHA." VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT EBAN VAN ZIJL OF AKTUR AND HIS SUPPORTERS WERE CONDUCTING A CAMPAIGN AGAINST BOTHA AND FOURIE AMONG THE NAT PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS. VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT THE CABINET MEETING LAST WEEK, WHICH CAME AFTER THE DEATH OF KAPUUNO, BUT BEFORE RECEIPT OF THE FINAL PROPOSALS, HAD BEEN LESS DIFFICULT. HE INDICATED THAT BOTHA HAD SUPPORTED THE POSITION SOUTH AFRICA COULD NOT TAKE ANY PRECIPITOUS ACTION AT THIS STAGE, BUT MUST FOLLOW THE PROCESS THROUGH TO THE END AND GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THE FINAL PROPOSALS. AFTER RECEIPT OF THE PROPOSALS ON THURSDAY, VAN HEERDEN SAID, HE AND OTHERS HAD STAYED UP ALL NIGHT IN ORDER TO DRAFT AN ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENT. AN EFFORT WAS MADE, HE SAID, TO TRY TO PUT THE PROPOSAL IN BROAD CONTEXT. VAN HEERDEN CONCLUDED THAT THE LEAKS ON THE CLARIFICATIONS COULD HAVE BEEN INTENDED IN PART TO COMPLICATE SWAPO'S CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSAL. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE EMPHASIZED BOTHA'S NEED TO STRENGTHEN ACCEPTABILITY OF THE PROPOSAL IN THE GOVERNMENT.

2. IN THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD FOLLOWING MCHENRY'S REMARKS AT THE PRESS CLUB, NO MENTION WAS MADE OF THE ARGUS STORY. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY ABOUT THE REPORTED ASSURANCES REGARDING THE RIGHT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO REQUEST RETENTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES IN THE TERRITORY, MCHENRY REPLIED THAT IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY COULD MAKE ITS VIEWS KNOWN ON THIS OR ANY OTHER QUESTION. MCHENRY WENT ON TO UNDERSCORE THAT THERE WERE NO SECRET OR PRIVATE ASSURANCES GIVEN TO ANY PARTY IN THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. BOWDLER

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